DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 419 229 CS 013 198

TITLE	What Works in Secondary Schools? Catching Up with Basic Skills.
INSTITUTION	Basic Skills Agency, London (England).
ISBN	ISBN-1-85990-077-1
PUB DATE	1998-03-00
NOTE	41p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Basic Skills Agency, Admail 524, London WC1A 1BR, England; phone: 0870-600-2400; fax: 0870-600-2401; web address: www.basic-skills.co.uk
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Basic Skills; Foreign Countries; *Instructional Effectiveness; Numeracy; Parent Participation; Program Effectiveness; *Reading Instruction; Secondary Education; *Spelling Instruction; Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS	*England; *Wales

ABSTRACT

This report describes the work of the schools in the Local Initiative Grants Programme (which funded, through the Basic Skills Agency, 103 secondary schools throughout England and Wales), and draws upon the most effective practice identified in aspects of basic skills provision. Emerging from the work of the Local Initiative Grants Programme are clear lessons for the organization of programs of intervention in reading, spelling, and numeracy in Year 7; what works best with older children; the most effective role that teachers throughout the school can play to support literacy; the successful models of parental and other support; and the place of out-of-school support activities in encouraging basic skills improvements. The report provides evidence of the progress made by pupils in the project; analyzes the success of the schools' programs in raising standards of literacy and numeracy; and provides models of the elements of the literacy programs that proved most effective. Contains numerous unnumbered charts and figures of data; appendixes contain brief descriptions of the Local Initiative Grants Programme and the Basic Skills Agency, and a list of participating schools. (RS)

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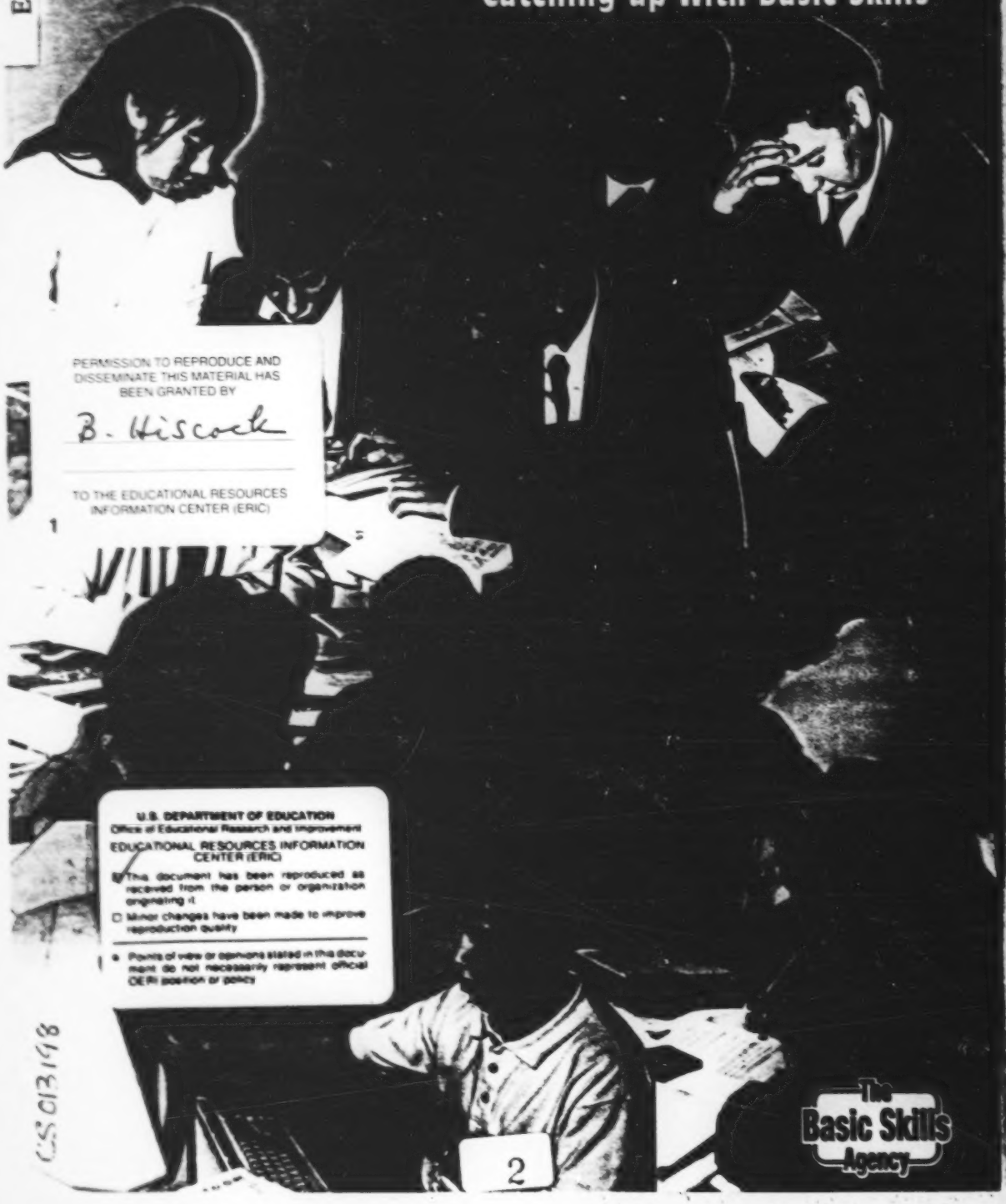
What works in Secondary Schools?

Catching up with Basic Skills



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The Basic Skills Agency

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Acknowledgements

Professor Alison Wolf, International Centre for Research on Assessment, Institute of Education, University of London.

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), for the use of maths items from the Third International Maths and Science Survey (TIMSS), populations 1 & 2.

FOREWORD

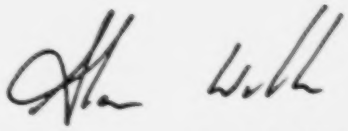
WE spend a great deal of time in education 're-inventing the wheel'. Partly this is because of an ingrained view in some schools and LEAs that unless it was 'invented here' it can't possibly work. Just as often it's because lessons from research are poorly disseminated. So poorly disseminated that teachers find it difficult to find out what's effective or end up just more confused. We've all received dense and tedious reports of research that we put on a 'to read' shelf but never get around to reading. For busy teachers there's even less likelihood that they'll read these kind of reports.

I hope that this report isn't like that. But just in case we'll also be disseminating what works in secondary schools through training sessions and through a number of National Support Projects based in the highly effective schools.

While it's important to get the teaching of literacy and numeracy right in primary schools, early intervention will be too late for some older pupils. So opportunities for catching-up in secondary school will need to be given high priority. If they aren't, many pupils won't be able to get much benefit from the wider curriculum. And some will leave school with basic skills that provide hardly any grounding for the world of work and later education and training.

I think we now know what works best in secondary schools. The reason I think this is because of our work with 103 secondary schools through our Local Initiative Grants programme across England and Wales. The diverse approaches used by secondary schools involved more than 14,000 pupils. All of the pupils were tested at the start of the programmes and at the end. This allowed us to draw objective lessons about what works most effectively.

I am grateful to Professor Alison Wolf of the Institute of Education, London University, for her help in analysing the test data. My thanks also go to the teachers and other school staff who put so much effort into the programme.



Alan Wells OBE
Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

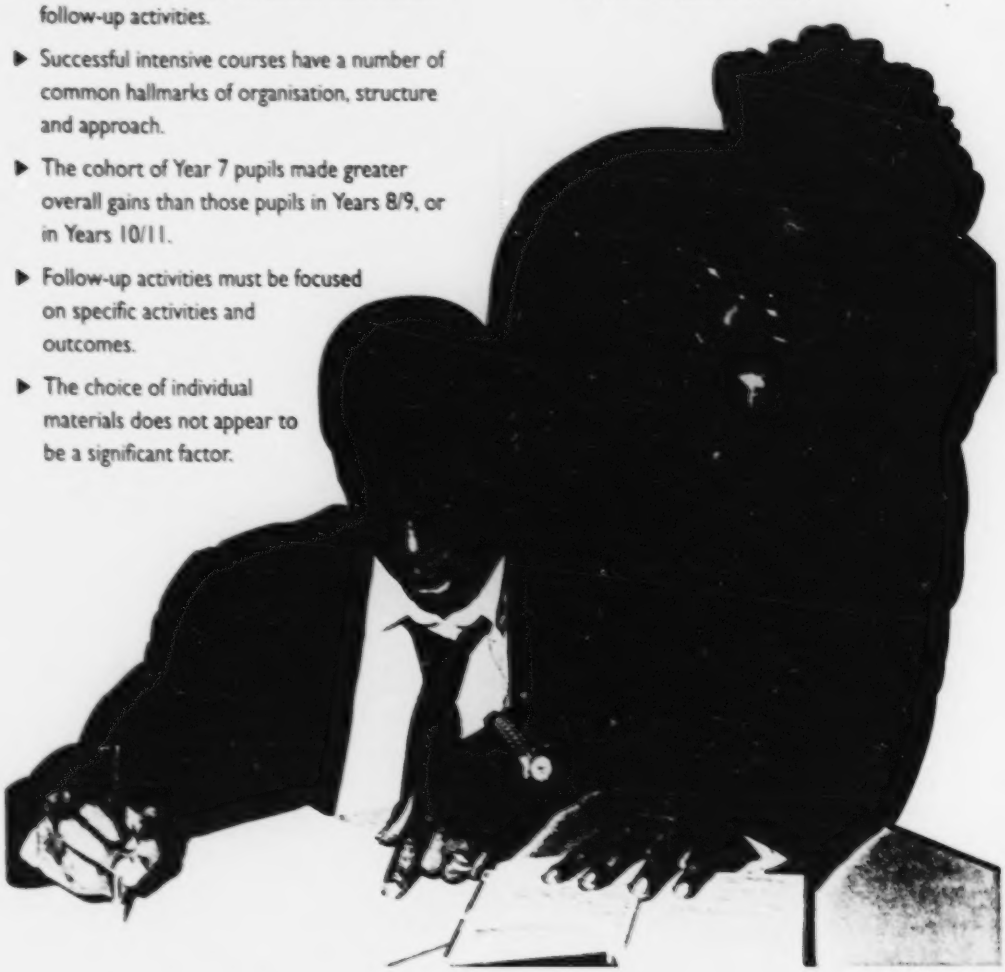
- The Local Initiative Grants Programme gave grants to 103 secondary schools in England and Wales for programmes to raise standards of basic skills.

Reading

- The most successful approach combines short, intensive programmes of tuition with focused follow-up activities.
- Successful intensive courses have a number of common hallmarks of organisation, structure and approach.
- The cohort of Year 7 pupils made greater overall gains than those pupils in Years 8/9, or in Years 10/11.
- Follow-up activities must be focused on specific activities and outcomes.
- The choice of individual materials does not appear to be a significant factor.

Spelling

- Spelling and key vocabulary should be taught as a separate activity to reading.
- Successful models include short courses and cross-school key vocabulary programmes.
- There was no correlation between levels of gain in reading and spelling.
- Work on reading alone cannot be relied upon to provide gains in spelling.



Numeracy

- Most schools focused provision on Year 7 pupils.
- Successful schools provided students with substantial needs structured intensive remediation programmes with clear aims and objectives and opportunities for consolidation of skills learned.
- Students with less need received maths lessons specifically given over to numeracy each week.
- Short but frequent aural mental maths practice sessions appeared useful to all participating pupils.

Staff Development/Parental Involvement

- The integration of basic policies into School Development Plans was a feature of successful programmes.
- Programmes must impact at Departmental levels within schools.
- Staff development programmes should focus on fewer teachers, but provide in-depth training in the teaching of basic skills.
- Attempts by schools to involve parents in the programmes were generally on the margins of the work undertaken, and therefore unsuccessful.
- Where systematic and repeated effort to involve parents was undertaken, schools reported high levels of participation and impact on children's attainment.

Primary-Secondary Liaison on Basic Skills

- A small number of schools developed primary-secondary transfer programmes.
- Models of cross-phase teaching of basic skills have been developed, including the sharing of teaching assistants, development of common assessment and materials.

INTRODUCTION

IN 1996-7 the Basic Skills Agency funded 103 secondary schools through a new Local Initiative Grants (LIGs) programme, in 62 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) throughout England and Wales. We chose these 103 schools from the 542 secondary schools that applied for a grant.

Many of the schools funded were in areas of considerable disadvantage and only one of the 103 secondary schools had results above the 1996 national average (44.5% 5 A-C grades at GCSE). Six of the schools were grant-maintained.

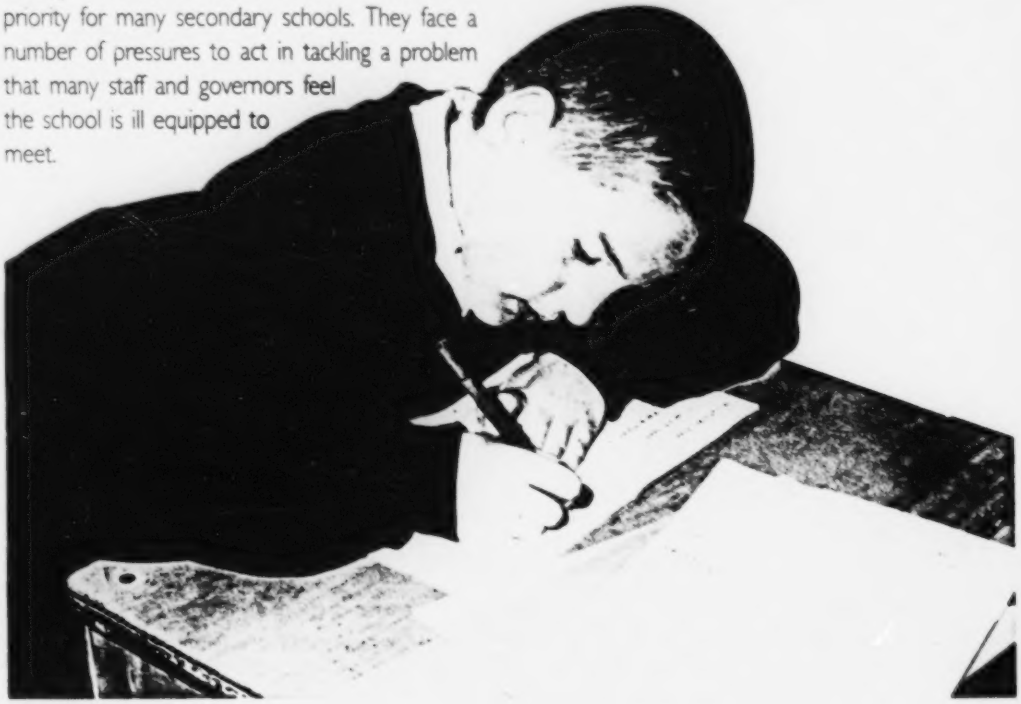
The average grant was £9,900 and all grants were match-funded by the schools. A total of 13,975 pupils took part in literacy programmes.

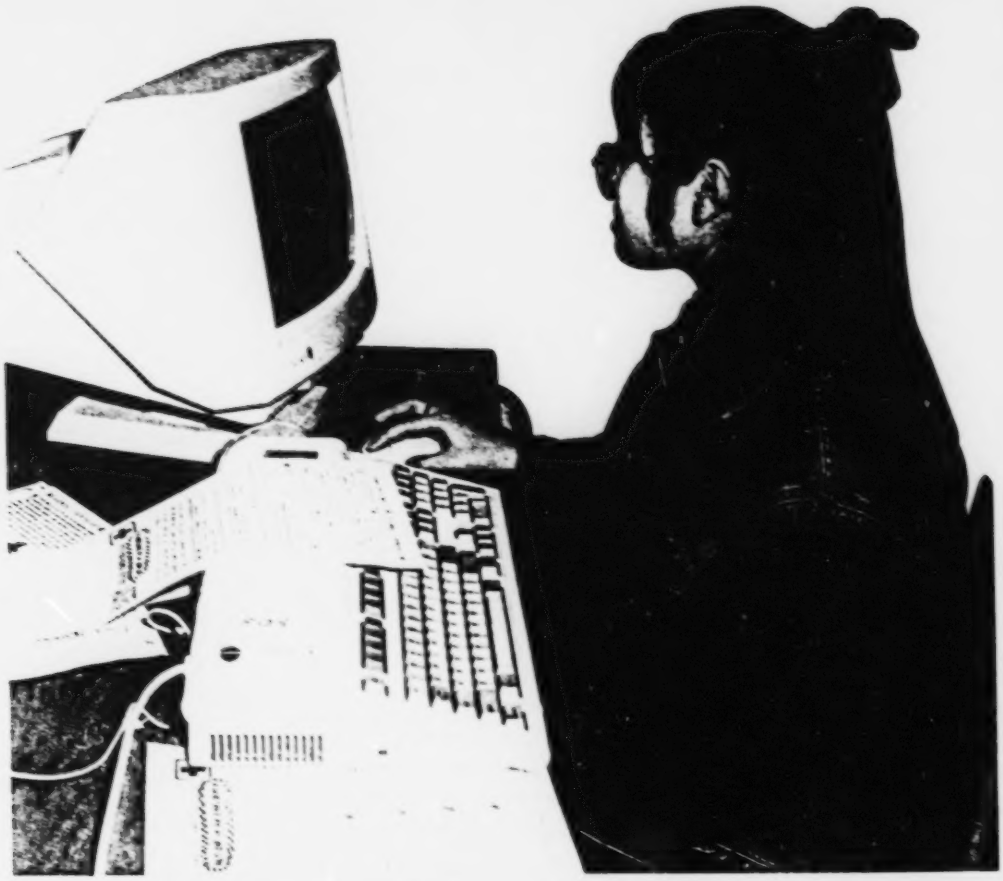
Raising standards of basic skills has become a priority for many secondary schools. They face a number of pressures to act in tackling a problem that many staff and governors feel the school is ill equipped to meet.

Substantial numbers of children continue to arrive in secondary school with reading, writing and spelling difficulties. An even larger proportion are experiencing difficulties with handling basic number.

To meet this challenge, schools recognise that they must:

- *assess new pupils and identify needs as quickly as possible (before children begin secondary education if possible);*
- *provide those with severe difficulties with programmes of support through the Code of Practice;*
- *help a group with higher level skills, but who may still struggle with comprehension and writing, to catch up as soon as possible;*





- *enable all pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy, so that they have mastered these 'gateway' skills to learning and adult life;*
- *achieve all of these tasks while avoiding the stigma that many children with poor basic skills experience.*

This report describes the work of the schools in the Local Initiative Grants Programme, and draws upon the most effective practice identified in aspects of basic skills provision. Emerging from the work of the Local Initiative Grants Programme are clear lessons for:

- *the organisation of programmes of intervention in reading, spelling and numeracy in Year 7;*
- *what works best with older children;*
- *the most effective role that teachers throughout the school can play to support literacy;*
- *the successful models of parental and other support;*
- *the place of out-of-school support activities in encouraging basic skills improvements.*

The report:

- provides evidence of the progress made by pupils in the project;
- analyses the success of schools' programmes in raising standards of literacy and numeracy;
- provides models of the elements of the literacy programmes that proved most effective.

LITERACY

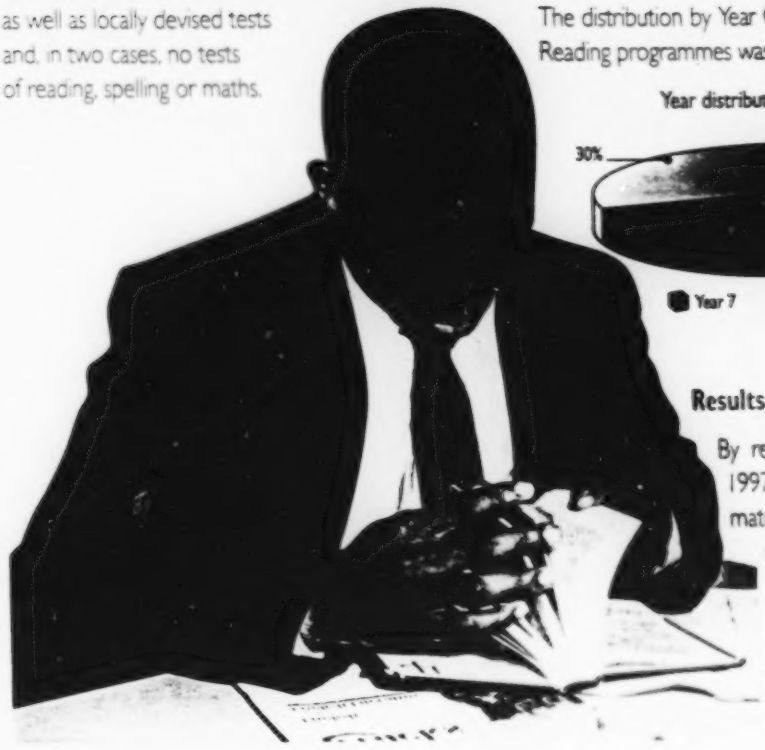
THE prime focus of the work of the Local Initiative Grants was the teaching of literacy skills, and in particular enhancing reading ability. 101 of the 103 schools chose to make reading the major element of their work. All these schools recognised that the literacy demands of the secondary curriculum require parallel development of writing and spelling. However, improvement in reading is directly related to improved comprehension, and therefore enables better access to the curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4. It is not surprising, therefore, that schools established programmes that covered the range of literacy skills, but put reading at the centre of activities.

Targeting Pupils

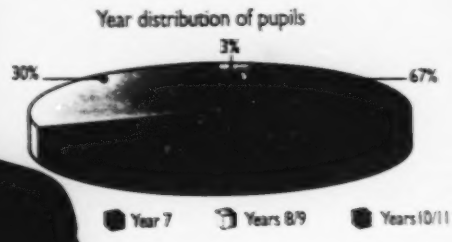
The schools participating in the Local Initiative Grants programme were required to identify target groups. It was difficult to find common methods of identifying literacy need across the 101 schools participating in the programme. As well as gathering information on the end of Key Stage 2 Assessment Tests, the list of tests used by schools included:

- *NFER-Nelson Group Reading Tests;*
- *Schonell Spelling Test;*
- *Neale Analysis;*
- *Daniels and Diack;*
- *The Holborn Reading Test;*
- *The Spooncer Diagnostic Test;*
- *Suffolk Reading Test;*
- *GAP Reading Comprehension Test;*
- *The London Reading Test;*
- *Salford Sentence Reading Test;*
- *The Edinburgh Tests*

as well as locally devised tests and, in two cases, no tests of reading, spelling or maths.



The distribution by Year Group of the pupils in the Reading programmes was as follows:



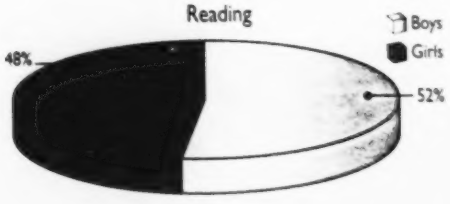
Results

By repeating the tests in June 1997, we have been able to match the progress made by schools overall, and by individual pupils and groups of pupils in particular; to the range of programmes run during the year.

For the purposes of our evaluation, all schools had to use common assessment tests of reading and spelling at the beginning and end of the programmes. These were:

- *the NFER-Nelson 9-14 Group Reading Tests;*
- *a spelling test, developed for the programme by Professor Alison Wolf of the Institute of Education in London;*
- *numeracy test items taken from the Third International Maths and Science Survey (TIMSS).*

Almost equal numbers of boys and girls were targeted by schools:



Analysis has been carried out by Agency staff, with the support of Professor Alison Wolf of the Institute of Education.

The scores of the initial and final reading tests were standardised to the pupils' ages. For example, a pupil who achieved the same standardised score at the beginning and end of the programme had effectively maintained their reading level. Any increase in the standardised score, therefore, is an indication of catching up.

1. For low-scoring pupils in the KS3 secondary classes, the increase in their standardised scores of 5 points or more means that their underlying progress/actual performance have improved by the amount that pupils at that level would normally register over a period of 18 months - 2 years.

In terms of improvements in reading, the schools fell into four groups.

Very High Progress

- *Almost 1 in 12 (8%) of the schools raised average reading levels of target pupils by 5 points or more above standardised progress. This means that average progress was in these schools at least twice the rate of progress expected from their starting scores.*

High Progress

- *More than a third (37%) of the schools raised average reading levels of target pupils by between 2.5 and 5 points above standardised progress – at least one and a half to twice what would have been expected from their starting scores.*

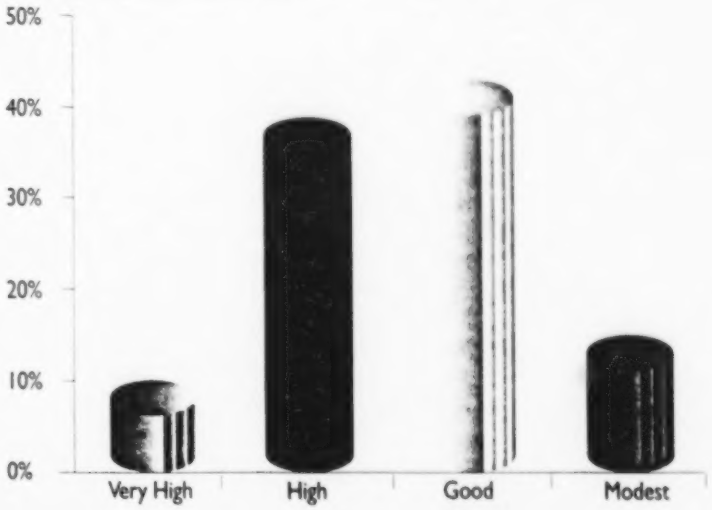
Good Progress

- *About 4 in 10 (41%) of the schools raised average reading levels of target pupils up to 2.5 points above standardised progress – progress faster than would normally be expected, given the starting scores.*

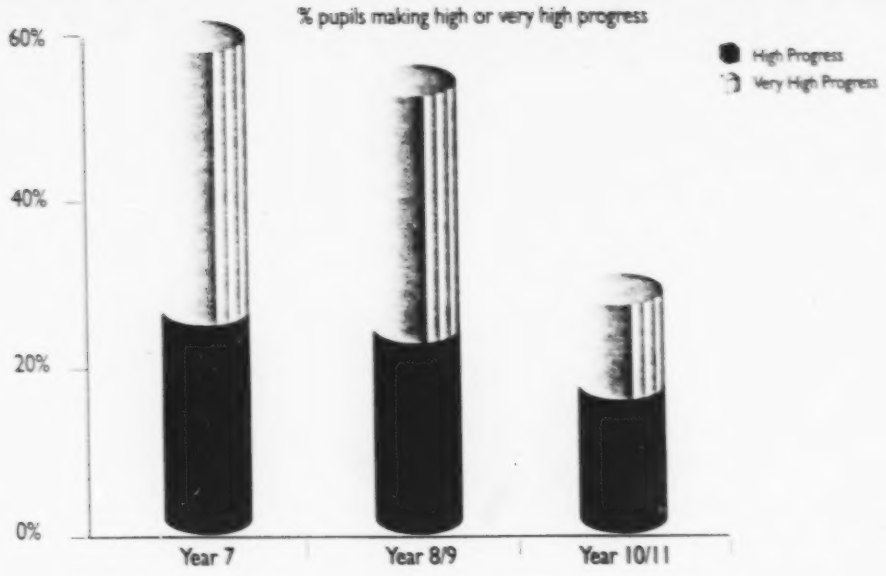
Modest Progress

- *About 1 in 7 (14%) of the schools produced average standardised scores that were lower at the end than at the beginning of the programme. Although target pupils did improve and make progress, this was equivalent to less than 10 months progress over the ten month period[2].*

The greatest area of success across the programme was with the major focus for most schools, the Year 7 pupils. The percentage of Year 7 pupils making progress was greater than for other Year Groups. Overall, Key Stage 3 pupils did better and made more progress than Key Stage 4 pupils.



2 Nearly all of the schools in the Local Initiative Grants Programme showed overall pupil gains in standardised gains. This suggests that, taking standard error variance into account, the underlying effect of these schools' activities was to promote progress.



The Key Stage 4 pupils in the Local Initiative Grants programme made up a much smaller group. The significantly lower progress rates of Key Stage 4 pupils was common to all schools. In general the skills of Key Stage 4 pupils in the programmes, according to the initial baseline test, were lower. Schools selected KS4 pupils for participation in their programmes who generally had greater difficulties with literacy than the KS3 cohort.

The Year 7 pupils who made greatest progress were those with an initial reading age of between 8.0 and 10.0 on the standardised tests used by all of the LIG schools. Usually these pupils did not have statements of Special Educational Need for their literacy difficulties, and had not received additional support or attention at secondary school.

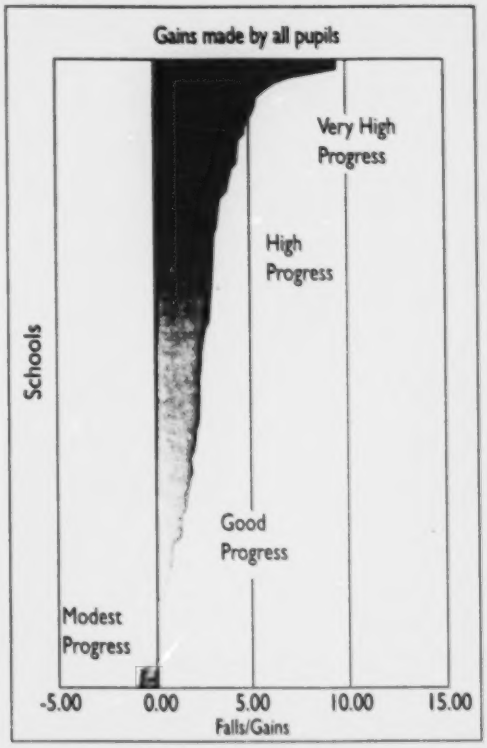
Although pupils with scores below 8.0 were involved in programmes in a number of schools they did not generally make the same amount of progress. Largely, this seems to be because the number of hours of direct instruction provided did not provide those pupils with more serious literacy difficulties with the level of support they required to make greater progress. At this level SEN departments are better suited to provide the individual support these pupils need.

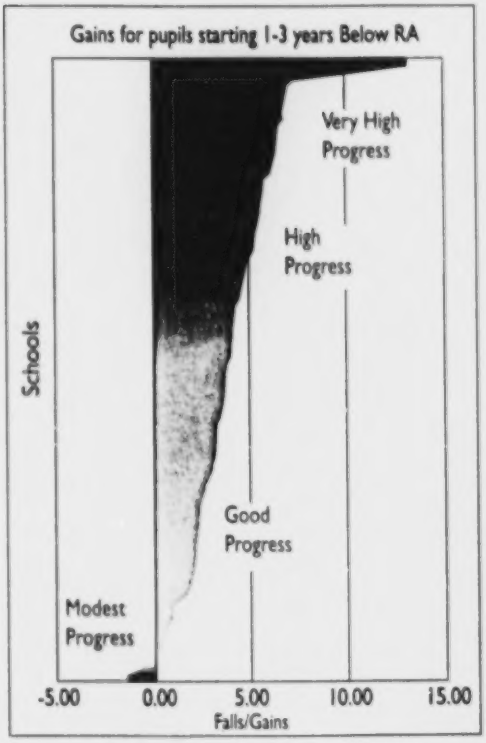
Similarly, although pupils with less significant difficulties with reading – those with scores between 10.0 and 10.9 – benefited from additional support, the progress they made was generally not as great as those pupils with more significant difficulties.

The most significant success of the programmes was the reduction in the number of pupils who began the year with reading ages between 8.0 and 10.0. By the end of the programme, the numbers of pupils falling into this key target group had been substantially reduced.

Of course, not all pupils in the programmes schools ran made significant progress. But the levels of individual improvement achieved indicates that pupils made a significant improvement in their relative as well as their absolute performance against national norms. Strict comparisons are difficult, because of the different baseline levels of the children. However, within all of the schools' programmes, the narrower and more focused the target group, in the 8.0-10.0 reading age band, the higher the percentage of children making progress.

The two graphs that follow illustrate the relatively greater success of the schools in tackling the basic skills of pupils in the 8.0-10.0 reading age band.





Boys' and Girls' Progress

There were five boys' schools and five girls' schools in the Local Initiative Grants programme. However, there was no significant difference between progress in these schools and in mixed schools. In the mixed schools, boys did as well as girls with no significant differences between boys and girls in improvement rates.

Given the acknowledged concerns about the attainment of boys in literacy, this outcome of the schools' programmes is curious. However, while a number of the schools were aware of the needs of boys – who were more likely in all schools to be in the lowest group of target pupils from initial baseline testing – all of the mixed schools ran programmes that included girls as well as boys.

In addition, much of the concern about boys' achievement has focused on their engagement in school and school activities. The specific focus and intensive nature of the programmes funded under the Local Initiative Grants programme demanded and encouraged the attention and commitment of pupils. Schools reported that boys responded well to the individual support and focused activity that was a standard feature of the programmes.

Very High Progress Schools

The **Very High Progress** schools universally adopted a 'two-track' approach[3]. All of them provided:

- **additional specific instruction for a target group of pupils through withdrawal from normal lessons;**
- **defined and structured activities to develop literacy skills as part of subject lessons.**

3. The breadth and variety of the programmes established in the Local Initiative Grants Programme, and the schools' choice of target pupils, meant that it was not possible to carry out a multivariate analysis of the programmes. However, the consistency in the approaches used by the most successful schools is highly encouraging and clear enough for us to be able to identify and report them.

These schools:

- *chose a target group of Year 7 pupils with reading ages between 8.0 and 10.0 years;*
- *provided additional specific instruction to this group through withdrawal from normal lessons;*
- *provided follow-up work in other subject lessons;*
- *assessed pupils regularly during the programme.*

Significant improvements, of over 5 points on the standardised scales, were made ranging from 68% of participating pupils in one school to 95% of participating pupils in another of the schools in the **Very High Progress** group.

Although all of the schools in the LIGs programme were required to test the pupils involved at the beginning and at the end of the grant period, the **Very High Progress** schools used assessment regularly throughout the period to:

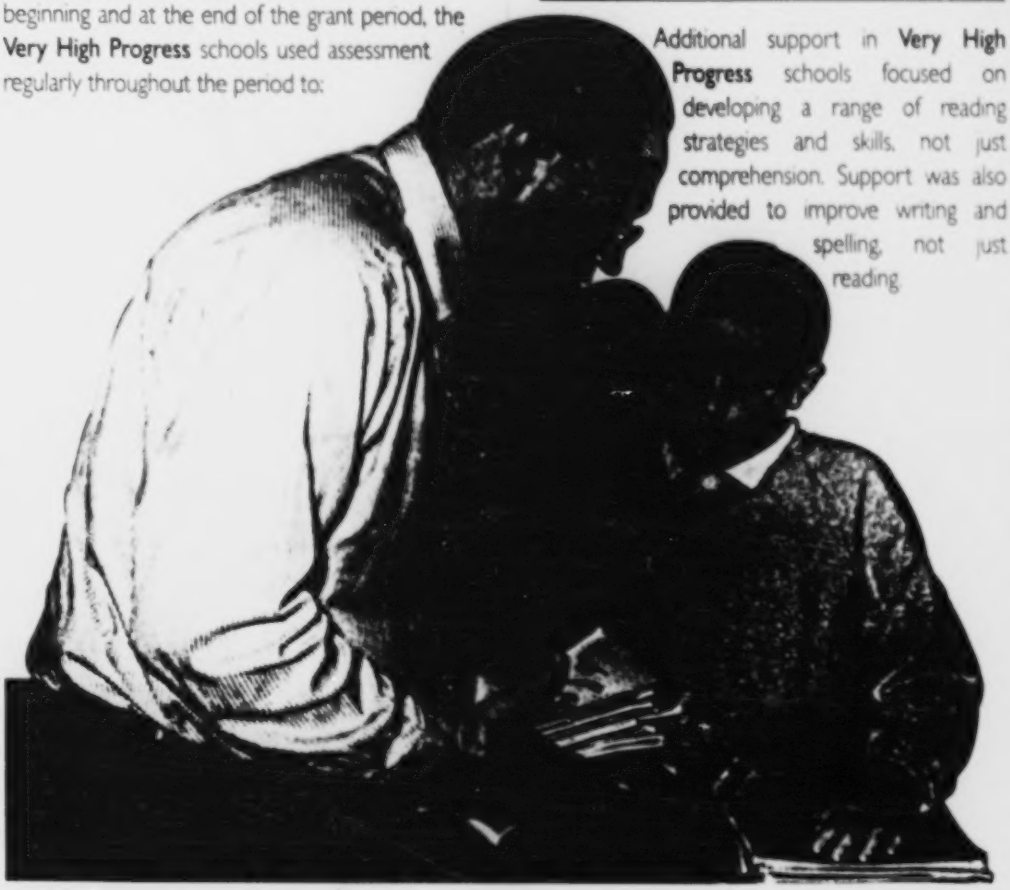
- *adjust the programme for individual pupils;*
- *provide extra help;*
- *assess the progress made.*

This information was made available to all staff involved in working with the pupils.

Additional help in subject lessons was provided through:

- *the use of IT for individual programmes (75% of schools);*
- *regular help from teaching assistants (62% of schools);*
- *paired reading or mentoring programmes (100% of schools).*

Additional support in **Very High Progress** schools focused on developing a range of reading strategies and skills, not just comprehension. Support was also provided to improve writing and spelling, not just reading.



Those schools within the **Very High Progress** and **High Progress** groups, with very high levels of pupils with literacy difficulties, organised their provision differently. The large numbers to be supported meant that the element of additional specific instruction had to be established within curriculum time, rather than handled through withdrawal.

THE LITERACY PROJECT

- All Year 7 pupils tested before entry using the Schonell and London Reading Test (LRT)
- 3 groups were identified: underachievers (LRT 100-115); below average readers (LRT 80-100); well below average readers (LRT below 80)
- 4 week programme: a lesson a day
- Re-tested 4 weeks after the programme ended
- 132 of 179 pupils participated
- 6 recalled for further 4 week period
- Sole use of Learning Resource Base during this time; separate workroom
- Focus on activities taken from the English curriculum to improve reading comprehension, fluency
- Most common reading texts; ***The Witches*** (Roald Dahl), ***Sheep Pig*** (Dick King-Smith), ***Red Sky in the Morning*** (Elizabeth Laird)
- Use of Literacy Project workbook, tasks including: skimming and scanning techniques, cloze procedures, comprehension and critical analysis of texts
- 15 spellings given at the start of each lesson, learned as homework
- Graded increase in difficulty of spelling words over 4 weeks
- Importance of good displays (for spelling work)
- Homework booklet distributed after 4 weeks
- 3 session follow-up support in curriculum areas

Cumberland School, Newham

THE PROGRAMME OF BASIC SKILLS INTERVENTION (ran over two periods of one term)

- **Study partnerships:** 32 Year 7 pupils with reading scores below 9.5 paired with trained older pupils following a series of activities, including spelling, reading, letter writing, research, learning methods
- **Parental involvement:** 15 pupils involved in paired spelling, study skills
- **Daily homework clubs:** 10-12 Year 7 pupils per day seeking basic skills help
- **Spelling and numeracy clubs:** 20 Year 7 and 8 pupils working on mnemonics, word groups, keyword spellings
- **Whole school training on basic skills issues:** 21 staff attending one-session courses throughout the year on IT and literacy, teaching basic numeracy, spelling strategies, effective learning in mathematics, with follow-up implementation
- **Whole school reading policy:** a cross-curricular working group met monthly to plan and implement a policy, including record cards, specified material for reading and awards
- **Consumer book project:** all Year 7 children on the Register of Need (78) were able to order and buy a book from a local bookshop on reading 3 reading books at school, and completing an evaluation sheet on each book. 74 children received books
- **Peer group paired reading and spelling:** ongoing programme
- **Differentiated material to enable pupils to access the curriculum more effectively:** delivered in collaboration between depart-mental and SEN team members
- **Collaborative work with local junior schools:** visits by SEN team members to 6 main feeder primary schools, purchase of common reading books to help transition

Collegiate High School, Blackpool

Structure

The way in which the **structure** of successful reading programmes was determined in the **Very High** and **High Progess** schools was a key to their success.

The length of the additional help provided from school to school varied.

- *In all but one of the* **Very High Progress** *schools, instruction was provided for between 16 and 31 hours over one term (in the case of one school, two terms). This usually consisted of two sessions per week and involved pupils being withdrawn from two lessons.*

- *In the remaining school, pupils followed a Core Skills course for four 55 minute periods over the full academic year (a total of 132 hours of instruction). Pupils also used an Integrated Learning System (ILS),* **Successmaker** *for thirty minutes each day. The gains achieved by pupils in this school were not, however, significantly greater than in the other* **Very High Progress** *schools.*

- *Structured programmes in both the* **Very High** *and* **High Progress** *schools were timetabled for more than one session per week. The 'added value' of the programmes was linked to the regularity with which reading was taught over a limited period of time.*

- *Short bursts of reading were evaluated by some of the schools in the two highest performing groups as more effective than fifty minute/one hour sessions, that are used by some schools as part of the English timetable. For example, a* **Very High Progress** *school organised programmes of reading into 20 minute sessions 3 times per week for target pupils. This school has previously used the model of the 'reading hour' for silent reading of self-selected texts. The revised approach yielded greater progress.*

The teaching approaches used in the intensive courses followed similar patterns, even though materials and staffing of the programmes varied. The following example is from a **High Progress** school.

THE BASIC SKILLS LITERACY PROJECT

- Highly structured programme and individualised lessons, focusing on reading, writing, spelling, handwriting study and organisational skills
- Direct teaching in how to focus on and attend to tasks, including group reading and shared paired reading at school and at home using Pause, Prompt, Praise
- Use of multi-sensory techniques in alphabet and spelling skills
- Differentiation in pace and style
- Use of specialist resources, GINN Impact, Global English, Style Spelling
- Access to Study Support Centre (Zone 90) before school, during lunch and after school. Supported reading, study and homework always available
- Tasks and instructions simplified, demonstrated, rehearsed and explained both individually and as a group
- Study skills: including planning, organisation, proof-reading and self-checking
- Alternative ways of recording, including word processor, diagram, orally given answers, etc.
- Reminders and encouragement when attempting work
- Setting personal goals with linked exercises and celebrations of success
- Emphasis on hard work, success, encouragement and increased self-esteem

Other groups received differentiated programmes and moved up sets during the period of the project.

Swanley School, Kent

Follow-up Work

All of the schools in the **Very High Progress** group provided follow-up activities, as part of the mainstream curriculum. These included:

- *DARTS[4] activities were part of all subject lessons for one term;*
- *a 'talking wall' in each Year 7 classroom, displaying writing and spelling activity from all subject areas;*
- *personal dictionaries;*
- *a Year 7 Newspaper Project, involving small groups of pupils producing class newspapers;*
- *key vocabulary reading and spelling programmes.*

Follow-up work was effective if:

- *a 'tight' structure and timetable was given to the staff involved;*
- *literacy, SEN or support staff were involved closely in preparing material;*
- *clear 'targets' for improvements in reading, spelling or other literacy skills were established.*

This clear focus for follow-up activities appears to be important. Many of the **High Progress** schools also used the same 'twin track' approach similar to the **Very High Progress** schools. However, the follow-up activities used by **High Progress** schools tended to be more general – for example, adopting a whole school spelling or marking policy, whole school reading weeks, competitions, etc. While schools in the **Very High Progress** group also used similar activities, the more specific classroom-based literacy tasks listed above seem to have been key factors.

4. DARTS (Directed Activities Related to Text) was developed in a Schools' Council 'Reading for Learning' Project undertaken at Nottingham University.

Each programme for basic skills should include the following:

- baseline testing;
- catch-up programmes for pupils with 1-3 years delay in basic skills;
- individual learning plans that highlight specific skills to be acquired;
- systems of recognition and reward;
- specified follow-up work in the rest of the timetable, in a range of curriculum areas.

All pupils should undergo testing on entry to the programme, using an objective standardised test for reading and spelling, and/or detailed information from end of Key Stage testing, in order to determine:

- those with literacy skills at or above their chronological age;
- those with skills 1-3 years below their chronological age;
- those with skills 3 years plus below their chronological age.

Pupils in the middle band should then be placed on short, intensive, catch-up programmes, designed to give a boost to their literacy or numeracy skills over the period of one term. The target for the programmes should be to get them to improve their skills by 6-18 months during this period.

The catch-up programmes should include:

- structured literacy programmes in reading or spelling (including eg. an Integrated Learning Programme, SRA, Toe-by-Toe, etc);
- regular reading to an adult (eg. Learning Support Assistant);
- comprehension exercises[5]/Directed Reading Activities;
- spelling and proof-reading activities;
- writing practice.

Catch-up programmes should be co-ordinated by a member of staff with knowledge and expertise in basic skills. The use of trained assistants is advisable.

Reinforcement should be provided in the rest of the timetable, during the period of the course. This should involve all teachers in:

- setting a range of reading activities (eg. detailed reading, scanning, library and access skills);
- encouraging checking of accuracy in spelling;
- providing opportunities for writing;
- application of school-wide spelling, punctuation and marking policies.

The programme should run typically for 2 periods per week for one term. Individual schools may alter the timetabling of the course to suit local needs; but the basic elements should be retained.

Pupils performance should be measured half way through and at the end of the course. Those making progress of less than 6 months should receive a follow-up individual plan and additional support through the Learning Support Department.

Rewards for involvement and achievement in the programme will include:

- certificates of achievement;
- informing and involving parents;
- prizes;
- inclusion of details of progress in the National Record of Achievement.

5. This reflects the clear recognition in the Very High Progress schools of the need to teach reading skills alongside higher-order comprehension skills.

Schools Making Modest Progress

The schools in this group all achieved some success with individual pupils. In addition, pupils made progress in literacy skills. However, the progress made overall by pupils involved in the project was less than forecast by the schools, and less than ten months in reading age.

There were clear reasons for this lack of progress. These schools chose to work with the pupils who had the most severe basic skills difficulties. The principal, or sole, target group for 50% of the schools in the modest progress band was pupils above Year 7. 85% of the schools focused on pupils scoring below 70 on the NFER-Nelson Group Reading Test – those with the greatest basic skills need.

In addition:

- *there was a much higher proportion of participating pupils more than three years below their chronological reading age at the beginning of the programme;*
- *the literacy programme consisted of unfocused or year-long activities, rather than short intensive courses;*
- *follow-up activities were undirected or vague (for example, 'Departments will be asked to emphasise the need for neat work and clear writing').*

Paired Reading Programmes

Paired reading schemes formed part of the activities of 59% of the schools' programmes. Highly valued by schools, they provide individual support to pupils with literacy needs as well as involving other pupils as 'mentors'.

The key to the success of these programmes was the preparation of the 'mentors' and the specific focus of the reading activities. The least successful programmes were vague and without targets for achievement and completion. Successful programmes had focus. Typically, they:

- *targeted the group of pupils with 1 - 3 years delay in reading;*
- *provided a structured range of reading activities, including non-fiction and National Curriculum texts;*
- *aimed to develop reading skills in addition to comprehension;*
- *provided adequate training in supporting reading and record keeping.*

Schools that provided a focus for paired reading programmes were likely to be more successful at

retaining pupils and sustaining the initiative. The following illustration comes from a **Very High Progress** school.

Paired Reading Programme

- Tuesday lunchtime and after school shared reading: trained volunteer partners from Years 10/11/12. 27 students participating. Use of Reading Records
- Home/school reading partnership: 8 students/parents participating. Instructions for parents on approaches
- Monitoring of programmes by staff outside the SEN
- Reading reward system; merit marks, awards
- Records of completion included in Records of Achievement

Highbury Fields School, London

Teaching Material

The teaching and learning material used by schools in the **Very High Progress** group seems to be a less important factor than other factors. Across these **Very High Progress** schools, there was little consistency in the use of particular material. Rather it is the *assessment, selection, structure and consistency* of the measures taken that seem to have produced these substantial improvements in reading level.

Material that was most commonly purchased, used and recommended by **Very High** and **High Progress** schools included:

- *Corrective Reading;*
- *Phonic based programmes including:*
  - *Alpha to Omega;*
  - *Toe-by-Toe;*
  - *ARROW;*
- *Junior Reading Programmes (e.g. Wellington Square);*
- *Differentiated curriculum material (e.g. Folens Specials);*
- *Readers, including:*
  - *Roboreaders*
  - *Livewire;*
  - *Headwork;*
  - *Impact.*

Schools reported great difficulty in finding material that was suitable to the ages of pupils receiving support. In particular, there was a lack of Year 7 national curriculum material that was accessible to poor readers.

Use of Information Technology

For those schools achieving the greatest levels of progress there was extensive use of IT programmes, including;

- *RM Successmaker Integrated Learning System (ILS)*
- *Global English ILS*
- *Accelereаd/Accelerwrite*
- *Star Spell*
- *Dyspell*
- *Wordshark*
- *a package of other IT software programs.*

Data was provided by schools on progress made by pupils through regular and continued use of Integrated Learning Systems (notably Successmaker, used by 15 of the participating programmes in the **Very High Progress** and **High Progress** groups). Pupils uniformly made progress within the ILS scoring systems. It was not possible, however, to relate their gains to the tested outcomes of the Local Initiative Grants programmes[6].

While there were positive reports from schools about the use of IT in the literacy programmes, a number of issues were reported that limited the effectiveness of its use:

- ***the number of computers available for individual use;***
- ***the availability of computers for literacy work;***
- ***the supervision and the skills of staff in handling the programs;***
- ***the follow-up of skills learned on ILS elsewhere in the timetable;***
- ***correlating gains made on ILS to other measures, including reading test scores, National Curriculum levels, etc.***

A distinctive use of ILS was made by one of the Local Initiative Grants **High Progress** schools, that shared licenses with four of its feeder primaries. This has allowed pupils entering Year 7 in September 1997 to 'carry over' their gains from use of the system in primary school, easing transition and maintaining gains made in Year 6.

6. See report into the effectiveness of ILS systems conducted by BECTA (formerly NCET) to be published in May 1998

SPELLING

WORK on spelling was included within the programmes of 100% of the **Very High Progress** and **High Progress** schools. However, the length and methods of delivery of spelling work varied considerably. The outcomes for spelling, as measured by the tests, mirror the outcomes for reading. There was a clear correlation between the schools that provided intensive provision, and progress in spelling.

Additionally, however, there was a strong link between the whole school approach to spelling and improvement in spelling overall, both to the learning of subject-specific spelling and of common and key words.

At an individual level, there was no correlation between levels of gain in reading and spelling. The pupils who made the greatest gains in reading did not necessarily make the greatest gains in spelling, or vice versa.

The programmes found that work on reading alone cannot be relied upon to provide gains in spelling. Spelling needs to be taught separately if significant gains are to be made. In general, schools that achieved greater gains in spelling gave it a particular focus, either through the provision of short, intensive courses, or through specific spelling activities within the curriculum, such as:

- *subject key words vocabulary (also known as technical vocabulary)*
- *common/key word spelling programmes.*

The Spelling Workshop

Offered as part of a Literacy Programme for 4 weeks within a 12-week program, 4 x 50 minutes per week. Groups of approximately 7 students.

Key Targets

- To improve student s spelling
- To identify name, shape, sound and reproduce correctly letters of the alphabet
- To listen for sounds in words to make rhymes and connections
- To be able to use a variety of strategies to spell accurately

Methods and Resources Used

- Brain gym (to help students store and retrieve information quickly and effectively)
- Visual imagery
- Alphabet strategies
- Multi-sensory approach
- Daily spelling lists
- Lists of spellings from curriculum areas
- ACE Spelling Dictionaries
- Proof-reading and self-checking strategies
- Style spelling and phonics
- Global English (IT program)
- Spelling and phonic games, LDA resources

Swanley School, Kent

Whole school spelling programmes were developed by many schools. Common policies were set in place for:

- *the repetition and reinforcement of key words and spelling patterns;*
- *the marking of pupils' work and correction of spelling;*
- *the display of key subject vocabulary words in the classroom;*
- *the setting of spellings as homework.*

School competitions and prizes were used by schools to motivate pupils and to create a school-wide awareness of the importance of spelling. Awards ceremonies, letters to parents, promotion in school newspapers and magazines were used by all schools to raise the awareness of staff and children.

School Spelling Development

- Each department to produce a spelling policy to be included in their Scheme of Work
- Consistent methods of marking children s work and correcting spelling
- All departments to agree sets of subject-specific words which should be displayed in every classroom used by a member of department. These words to be displayed prominently and changed regularly if appropriate (change of topic, etc.)
- Every member of staff to be provided with a dictionary to be kept in their classroom for reference by pupils
- All staff to be taught the Look-Cover-Write-Check method of spelling
- All boys Years 7-11 to be taught this method during designated English lessons
- Additional out-of-school training for designated staff on the teaching of spelling
- Regular testing of whole year groups to measure spelling age

Barry Boys Comprehensive School

Staff Development Programmes

Staff development programmes were used by schools to improve teachers' skills in supporting literacy in their classes. The main areas for staff development were:

- *providing a more varied literacy 'menu' in subject classes;*
- *making opportunities for writing in class;*
- *use of key subject vocabulary;*
- *better use of the black and white boards, and OHPs;*
- *differentiation of worksheets;*
- *consistent marking and spelling policies;*
- *departmental priorities for reading and writing.*

Schools should provide programmes of staff development at different levels. Some basic skills activities may be more effectively provided as whole school training, for example:

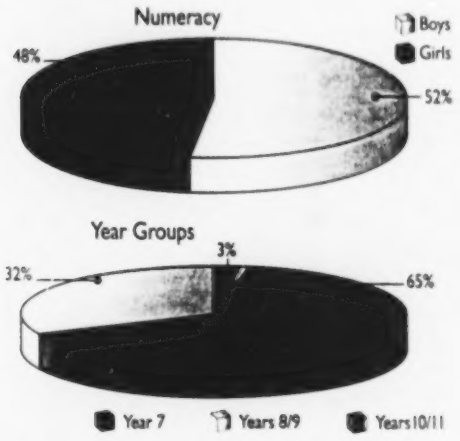
- *Look-Cover-Write-Check;*
- *Paragraph and Writing Frames;*
- *Text Marking.*

Other, more in-depth approaches that look at more substantial and sustained intervention, including spelling programmes, introducing menus of reading and writing activities will be more effectively delivered as part of departmental training programmes or year group training.

NUMERACY

ONE third of the schools in the Local Initiative Grants programme included an aspect of numeracy in their activities. However, only two schools focused entirely on numeracy. A total of 2483 pupils received support in numeracy. For most of the remaining 31 schools, the interventions in numeracy were a minor part of the overall work of the grant: literacy work made up the prime focus of the programmes.

The proportions of pupils by gender and year group was as follows:



In real terms for these schools this meant significant numbers of students on entry to Year 7 experiencing problems with basic literacy skills or basic numeracy skills. Weaknesses in understanding and use of the four operations of calculation and in knowledge of number facts, including multiplication facts, and in the ready application of these, result in significant numbers of students entering secondary school at Levels 2 and 3 in mathematics.

Most schools chose to focus on their Year 7 provision. We were not looking for the next 'big idea' but for approaches that would initiate a manageable and sustainable set of practices that could be extended to other year groups.

A small number of schools, some 15% of the overall number of schools that included numeracy in their programmes, achieved absolute improvements in the numeracy levels of their participating pupils, at rates higher than the proportional increase achieved within the TIMSS[7] study[8].

It is difficult to isolate the individual elements that made up the successful numeracy programmes, from the activities of the less successful schools. There was greater commonality in the projects undertaken by all of the schools involved in numeracy in the Local Initiative Grants programme. Nevertheless it is possible to identify some features of the work of the successful schools that appeared to make a difference.

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7. The TIMSS items used for the baseline assessment of numeracy were drawn overwhelmingly from the ***Whole Numbers*** and ***Fractions and Proportionality***. Two further questions were added from the category of ***Data Representation***, and two from ***Measurement***. The choice of questions reflected the focus of the LIGs programme on basic numeracy skills.

8. Overall, the performance of the pupils participating in the numeracy programmes was disappointing. The end-of-programme scores of the pupils were compared against the initial baseline score. They were also compared with the English data from the TIMSS study. Few schools achieved equal or greater gains than the TIMSS group. This may be for two reasons:

   - the LIGs pupils were not a representative sample of the population – they were selected according to the schools' own priorities;
   - the average starting scores for individual schools differed widely. In many schools the average score in the autumn was considerably higher than for the TIMSS group. Improvements on these scores, therefore, hit the 'ceiling effect' – there simply wasn't the same scope for improvement.

Common identifiable factors have contributed to the programmes' effectiveness in raising pupils' levels of attainment in numeracy and some of these are described more fully below. These include:

- *the use of objective baseline assessment of need on entry to Year 7 to be able to identify precisely where need lies and target resources;*
- *changes in the delivery and management of mathematics lessons with a number of these lessons specifically given over to numeracy each week; structured intensive remediation programmes for students with clear aims and objectives and opportunities for consolidation of skills learned.*

Maths in Action

4 lesson unit x 50 minutes for each year group, in conjunction with local employer (producing household detergents)

Real-life Data

Maths tasks using the data, including:

- place value
- four rules (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division)
- area
- volume
- estimating size
- angles
- financial calculation
- visit to factory.

Queen Elizabeth School, Rochdale

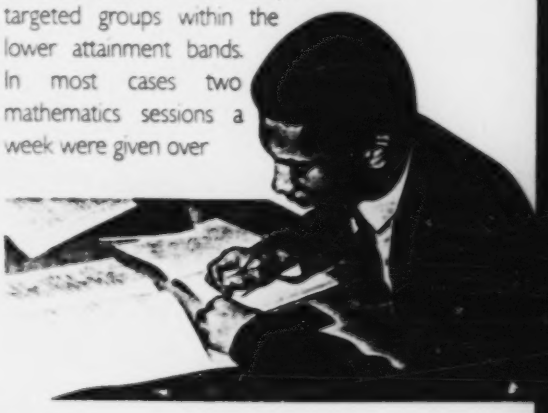
The approaches to teaching numeracy used by the most successful schools were as follows:

- **short but frequent aural mental maths practice sessions which include 5-10 minutes a day of quick fire practice and short teacher-focused activities and games;**
- **simple regular assessment to monitor progress;**
- **provision of motivating age appropriate material covering the basic content areas;**
- **the presence of whole school reinforcement strategies;**
- **integration of the development of numeracy skills in other subject lessons and in tutor time;**
- **supported study clubs involving basic numeracy activities;**
- **the presence of computer assisted learning including Integrated Learning Systems (ILS);**
- **parental involvement in student's numeracy development.**

Changes in the Delivery and Management of Mathematics Lessons

Schools in the programme re-addressed the structure and management of delivery within clearly defined focused numeracy lessons. Numeracy schemes of work were drawn up which matched identified needs in the basic concepts of number and ensured progression within these. This work aligns with current practice in primary schools emerging from the National Numeracy Project and begins to offer some continuity of approach at the point of transition across the two phases.

For some schools this led to changes in delivery across the Year 7 cohort. For others a different approach to the delivery of the mathematics curriculum was made for only the targeted groups within the lower attainment bands. In most cases two mathematics sessions a week were given over



to numeracy. Lessons began and ended with teacher demonstration or modelling of the target concepts and skills and included structured differentiated group activities featuring an increased use of practical equipment.

Structured Intensive Programmes

In combination with the focused numeracy sessions Integrated Learning Systems were used. As with reading, these programs allow for intensive positive feedback on progress and progression according to individual need. Pupils were given frequent and regular short sessions on these programmes and staff development time was devoted to becoming familiar with the content and the management systems. Training of mentors or classroom assistants meant supervision and planning of these sessions could take place. This enabled the teacher then to work with a remaining smaller group on basic numeracy activities on a rotation basis.

Objective Baseline Assessment

A common recognition by schools was that baseline data provided from the end of Key Stage 2 results has to date not been consistently supplied and often arrived late into the autumn term. Pre and post testing of students on the focused numeracy programmes indicated the scale and direction of subsequent support needed for the pupils.

Frequent Aural Mental Maths Practice Sessions

Regular oral/aural practice was an important part of the more successful programmes to date. Mathematics departments, in order to support the development of mental fluency with number, have devised a structured set of five to ten minute tasks for the start of numeracy sessions. In some instances this was taken beyond the numeracy classroom into Year 7 tutor time sessions with teachers of the subjects following the

'mental maths scheme of work' with their tutor groups.

A Mathematics Department Initiative

- Focus on four Year 7 maths groups in middle/low ability range
- One 50-minute numeracy lesson within the maths timetable each week
- Oral numeracy practice for approximately 5 minutes each mathematics lesson: tables, addition, subtraction, simple sequencing
- Parent supported numeracy homework booklets each week
- Lunchtime computer based club

Rainham School for Girls

One particular approach included a whole school focus on learning multiplication facts. The sessions were delivered mainly in tutor groups. Regular tests with a standard format allowing a 5-second response time were conducted with week on week improvement being monitored. Praise and reward were prominent in all these sessions with focus assemblies featuring competitions between tutor groups within years rewarded by book vouchers.

Presence of Reinforcement Strategies

A variety of measures were taken to put numeracy at the forefront of the schools' activities for both the students and staff. The 'talking wall' of numeracy displays across subject areas and mathematical keywords in classrooms provided the visual cues to reinforce the numeracy drive. Links to local employers have informed staff development programmes, mentoring projects and units of work on the vocational aspects of numeracy which examine the mathematical concepts and skills involved.

Development of Numeracy Skills in Relevant Subject Lessons

Some of the schools undertook audits of numeracy skills needed in other curriculum areas. This was followed by whole school INSET provided by the mathematics department, aimed at ensuring a consistent approach to the teaching of common areas of maths in different subjects. The application of numeracy skills in subject contexts was planned, as a teaching point in lessons.

A consistent lead on methodological and content issues from senior figures in mathematics departments has been instrumental in achieving success and commitment among other departments in this. Subject teachers consistently reported impacts on attainment in, for example, science, geography and technology.

Maths Across the Curriculum

Staff in all year groups were given support material, advice and were required to include activities and practice in the following areas as part of their lessons:

- **Time**
- **Measurement**
- **Shape**
- **Graphs Statistics and Charts.**

This has additionally meant that the school has introduced:

- **Clocks in every classroom and work area**
- **Rulers for every child.**

Queen Elizabeth School, Rochdale

Supported Study Clubs

Priority has been given to lower attaining groups to use computer assisted learning facilities, take part in mathematical challenges and work on tasks directed by their numeracy teacher in staffed lunchtime, breakfast and after school study centres. These clubs, organised outside the timetable were part of growing cultures of challenge, rigour and support leading to an expectation of success among the students.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

OVER 90% of the schools participating in the programme included an objective of involving parents in basic skills programmes. Schools made a strong link, in their applications for funding, between parental involvement and support and the motivation and commitment of pupils. However, attempts by schools to involve parents in the programmes were generally on the margins of the work undertaken, and therefore unsuccessful. This aspect of the programmes developed by schools worked least well.

Where systematic and repeated effort to involve parents was undertaken, schools reported high levels of participation and impact on children's attainment. Early contact with parents, and the organisation of parental involvement has proved necessary, in order to gain support from parents for literacy work at school and in the home.

The example overleaf is from a **High Progress** school, which achieved literacy gains through a parental involvement reading programme.

Example C

Literacy Launch

300 Year 7 parents attending

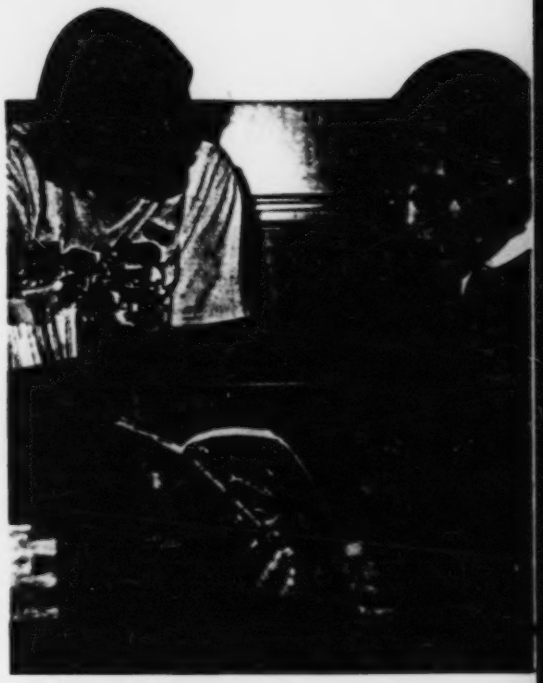
Aims of the evening

- To disseminate detailed information on the Year 7 programme
- To inform parents of the research into basic skills attainment and learning effectiveness
- To engage parents as coaches and partners
- To provide opportunities for parents to seek help and consultation
- To supply parents with resources so that they can help their child
- To inform parents of teaching techniques to be used in teaching basic skills
- To give parents confidence in helping their child

Format of the evening

- Introduction by members of the Core Literacy Team outlining research findings, the Literacy Programme and parents role
- Use of the Main Hall as a Literacy Conference centre
- Displays staffed by experts
- Explanatory leaflets (***How to help your child read more proficiently and more regularly***)
- Examples of useful publications
- Recommended reading list by the school and local library
- Local bookshop display
- Question and answer session on the Literacy Project
- An opportunity to speak to the child s form tutor
- Refreshments

Camborne School, Cornwall



Parents have been involved in **Very High Progress** and **High Progress** schools in the following ways:

- *paired reading partners in school time, both of their own and others' children;*
- *homework partners;*
- *participants in whole school or year group literacy events;*
- *providers of praise or reward.*

Four schools attempted to establish **family literacy** groups as part of their programmes. These groups targeted parents who themselves had difficulties with literacy. All of the schools had problems in recruiting and sustaining their groups, because of:

- *reluctance of parents with basic skills problems to take up the offer of family literacy;*
- *the feelings of 'awkwardness' expressed by some parents on being in secondary school during the day;*

- *logistical difficulties, including the timing of courses, distance of families' homes from the secondary school;*
- *work patterns.*

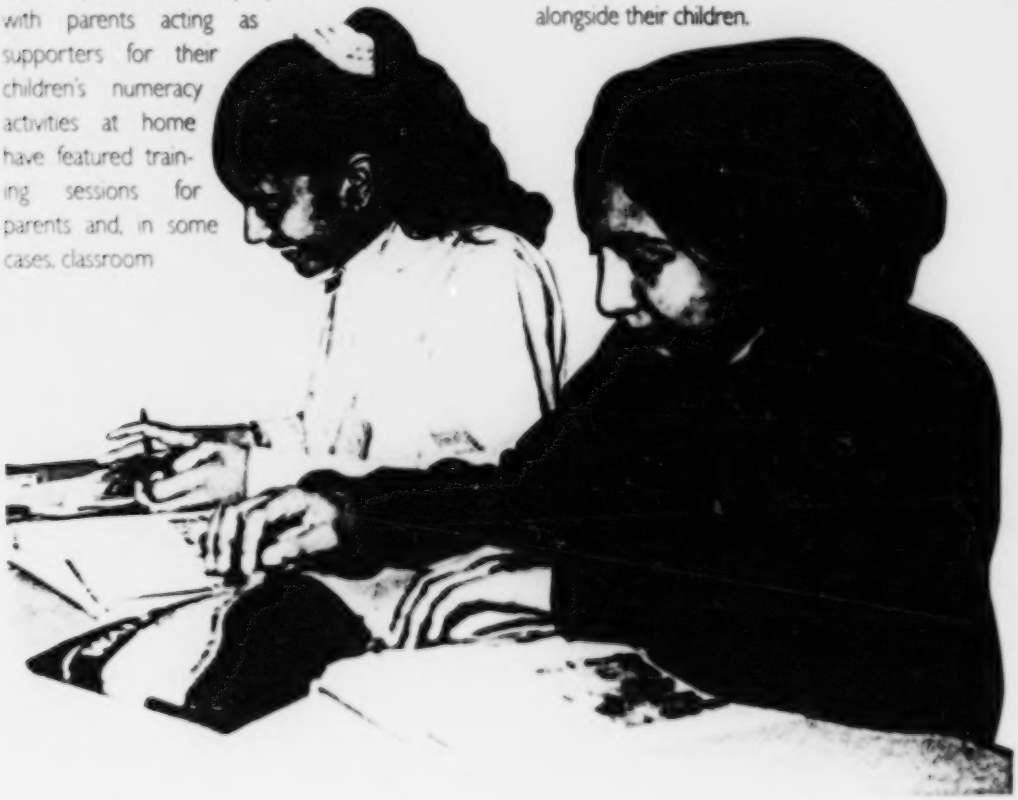
The Basic Skills Agency is currently trialling a model of family literacy provision with parents of Year 7 pupils who have basic skills difficulties and their children. It draws on the highly successful model developed with early years children and their parents. However, the pilot schools are experiencing many of the difficulties encountered by LIG schools. It may be that the other models of parental involvement can prove more effective.

Parental Involvement in Maths

Schools reported greater success in involving parents in programmes of numeracy support than in literacy. Paired maths projects with parents acting as supporters for their children's numeracy activities at home have featured training sessions for parents and, in some cases, classroom assistants acting as liaison to parents to support their participation in the schemes.

In some schools maths bags with items of equipment needed for various units of the home numeracy activities have been loaned out and changed as pupil's progress through the various topics and record their progress, supported and monitored by their parents, in a diary to the teacher. Programmes made expectations clear in terms of time and frequency.

High quality 'in-house materials' were produced which reinforce and extend, in the home context, concepts and skills taught in the numeracy sessions. They offered programmes of work to be completed at home, which gave both pupil and parent a clear sense of direction and what is expected. In some schools parents have taken up opportunities to use computer facilities in study centres to support numeracy development alongside their children.



WORK WITH PARTNER PRIMARY SCHOOLS

A SMALL number of the schools in the programme made use of the grants to develop their links with primary schools in the areas of literacy or numeracy. While all of the schools had regular contact with their partner schools, the grant provided an opportunity to establish better contact in sharing information about the basic skills of pupils and undertaking joint activities.

The joint approaches in this area that were tested as part of the programmes included:

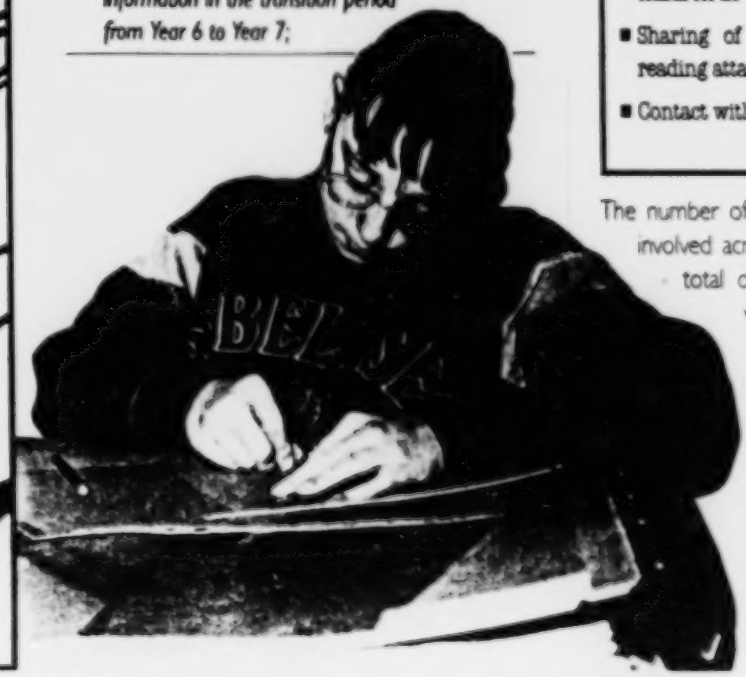
- *deployment of teachers, teaching assistants and other staff to provide reading input and reading support to Key Stage 2 children;*
- *the formation of working groups to develop common approaches, materials and recording of information in the transition period from Year 6 to Year 7;*
- *the purchase of common reading material and subject textbooks;*
- *joint 'Book Weeks' between individual primary schools and the secondary school;*
- *the setting up of paired reading programmes, involving Year 7 & 8 pupils reading to and with groups of junior school pupils.*

Models of cross-phase teaching of basic skills have been developed.

Working Across the Phases

- Teaching Assistant works three days in primary; two days in secondary
- Senior member of secondary school teaching staff works with group of disaffected children in Year 6
- Sharing of information on children and reading attainment in Year 6
- Contact with parents

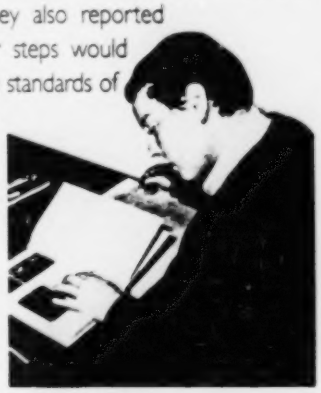
Henry Smith School, Hartlepool



The number of primary schools and their pupils involved across the programmes was small, a total of 122 children in all. The pupils were not tested as part of the programme. However, schools have reported improvements in end of Key Stage Assessments for these pupils, and greater preparedness for the literacy demands of the secondary school curriculum, as a result of the preparatory measures taken by the primary and secondary schools in partnership.

CONTINUATION OF PROGRAMMES

SCHOOLS in the programme were asked to report on what action would be taken to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme within their school. They also reported on what further steps would be taken to raise standards of basic skills as a result of the Local Initiative Grants work.

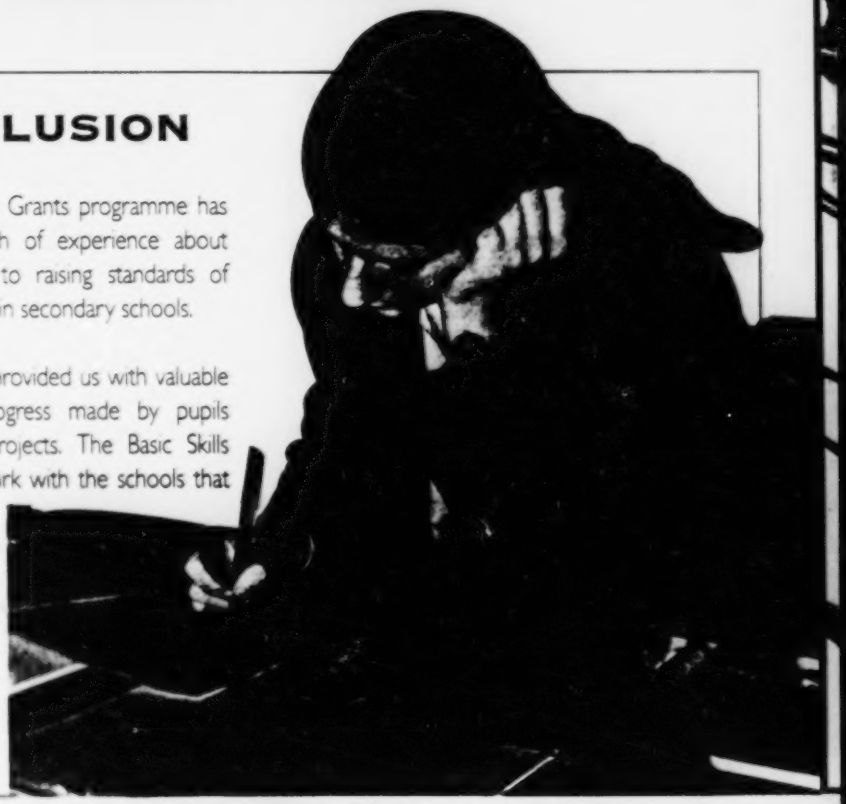


97%	*of schools continued the work established under the Grant in full or in part.*
67%	*of schools have identified further basic skills programmes within their School Development Plans.*
88%	*are continuing programmes of staff development.*
34%	*of schools are working with partners outside the schools, including parents, volunteers, partner primary schools, to improve basic skills.*

CONCLUSION

THE Local Initiative Grants programme has provided a wealth of experience about effective approaches to raising standards of literacy and numeracy in secondary schools.

The Programme has provided us with valuable evidence of the progress made by pupils involved in school projects. The Basic Skills Agency intends to work with the schools that took part in the programme, to monitor and assess the continued progress of the children throughout the remainder of their school career.



APPENDICES

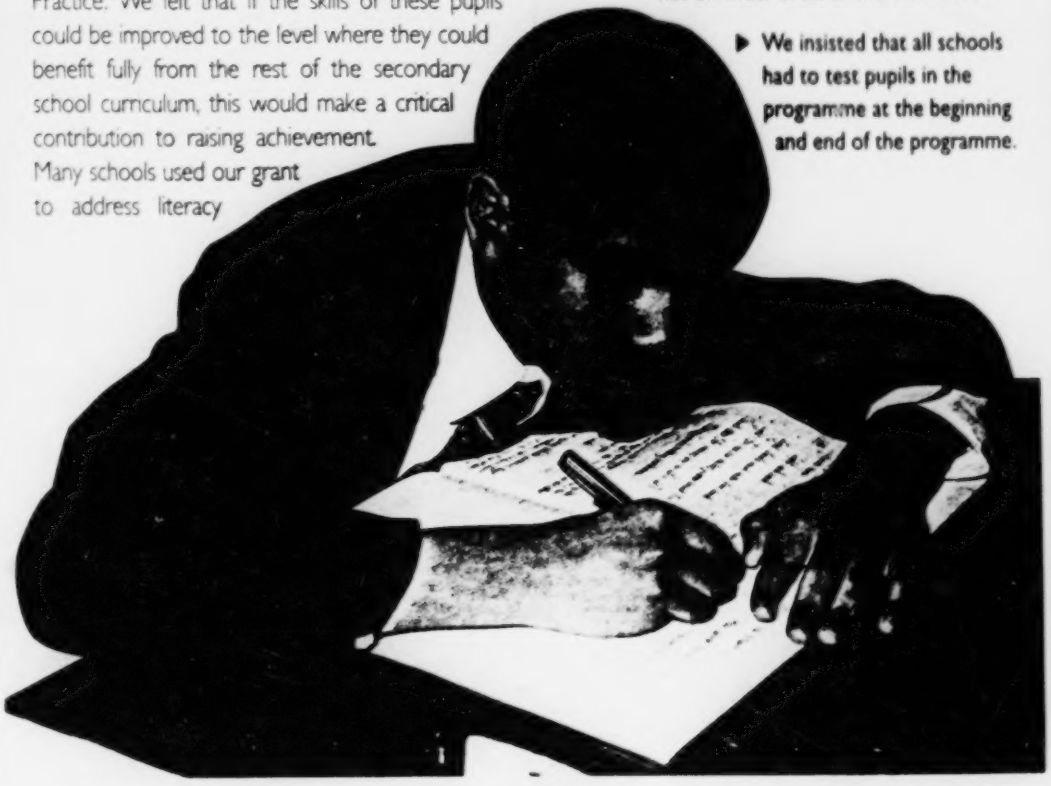
Appendix 1
The Local Initiative Grants Programme

The LIGs programme was developed as a response to the increasing evidence that a significant number of pupils in secondary schools were continuing to struggle with basic skills they should have mastered by the time they left primary school. Evidence drawn from applications we received suggested that about a third of pupils were lagging behind in literacy.

We decided to focus on the group of pupils in secondary schools who, although not the pupils with the very weakest basic skills, are behind and are usually outside the scope of the Code of Practice. We felt that if the skills of these pupils could be improved to the level where they could benefit fully from the rest of the secondary school curriculum, this would make a critical contribution to raising achievement. Many schools used our grant to address literacy issues high-lighted in their own OFSTED inspection reports.

We set down minimum conditions for schools, to guide their work.

- **We wanted schools to demonstrate that they would take a 'whole school' approach, rather than focus support only on SEN staff.**
- **We wanted schools to be able to experiment with new and imaginative approaches, not just provide more of the same.**
- **We wanted to see grants concentrated on improving attainment in literacy and numeracy, not on wider areas of the curriculum.**
- **We insisted that all schools had to test pupils in the programme at the beginning and end of the programme.**



Appendix 2
List of Participating Schools

Barking & Dagenham
Warren Comprehensive School

Bath & NE Somerset
Ralph Allen School

Bedfordshire
Hastingbury Upper School & Community College
Kingsland Community College

Berkshire
Denefield School GM

Birmingham
Hodge Hill Girls' School
John Wilmott School
Moseley School

Bristol
Ashton Park School

Buckinghamshire
The Lord Grey School GM

Cambridgeshire
City of Ely Community College
Impington Village College

Cardiff
Rumney High School

Cheshire
Birchwood Community High School

Conwy
Ysgol Aberconwy

Cornwall
Camborne School & Community College
Bodmin Community College
Brannel School
Penryn Community School

Coventry
Barr's Hill School & Community College
Coundon Court School & Community College
Tile Hill Wood School

Cumbria
Southfield School

Derbyshire
Aldercar School
High View School & Technology Centre
Swanwick Hall School

Devon
The John Kitto Community College
Teignmouth Community College

Ealing
Dormers Wells High School

East Sussex
The Grove School

Essex
Hylands School GM
Mark Hall Comprehensive School

Hackney
Hackney Free & Parochial CE Secondary School

Hartlepool
Henry Smith School

Havering
The Chafford School

Islington
Highbury Fields School
Highbury Grove School

Kent
Greenacre School
The North School
Rainham School for Girls
Swanley School
Wilmington Hall School

Kirklees
Earlsheaton High School
Fartown High School

Lancashire
Collegiate High School
Glenburn School
Southlands High School

Leeds
Allerton Grange High School
Priesthorpe School
Wortley High School

Leicestershire
Babington Community College

Lewisham
Sedgehill School

Lincolnshire
The Castle Hills Community School GM

Luton
South Luton High School

Manchester
South Manchester High School

Merthyr Tydfil
Vaynor & Penderyn High School

Merton
Tamworth Manor High School

Monmouthshire
Monmouth Comprehensive School

Newcastle
Walbottle Campus
West Gate Community College

Newham
Cumberland School
Stratford School GM

Newport
Hartridge High School

Norfolk
Hewitt School

North Lincolnshire
Thomas Sumpter Comprehensive School

North Somerset
Wyvern School

North Tyneside
Norham Community High School

Northamptonshire
Roade School

Northumberland
Bedlingtonshire Community High School

Nottinghamshire
Portland School
The Rufford School

Oldham
Hathershaw School

Oxfordshire
Banbury School
St Birinus School

Rhondda Cynon Taff
Blaengwawr Comprehensive School

Rochdale
The Queen Elizabeth School

Sandwell
Wodensborough High School

Sefton
St George of England High School

Sheffield
Bradfield School
Chaucer School
King Edward VII School

Shropshire
Phoenix School

Somerset
Frome Community College

Southwark
St Thomas the Apostle College GM

Staffordshire
Leek High School
Woodhouse High School

Stockton-on-Tees
Thornaby the Dene

Stoke-on-Trent
Birches Head High School

Tameside
Hyde Technology School

Trafford
Flixton Girls' High School

Vale of Glamorgan
Barry Boys' Comprehensive School

Wakefield
Airedale High School
Minsthorpe Community College

Waltham Forest
Leytonstone School
Rush Croft School

Warwickshire
Campion School & Community College

Westminster
Pimlico School

Wiltshire
Oakfield School

Wirral
Park High School
Wallasey School

Wolverhampton
Deansfield High School
St Peter's Collegiate School

Wrexham
The Groves High School

The Basic Skills Agency

THE Basic Skills Agency is the national development agency for basic skills in England and Wales and is funded mainly by the Government. However, we are an independent organisation and a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. We are a not-for-profit organisation.

Our Patron is Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal and our Chairman is Sir Claus Moser KCB CBE FBA. The Director of the Agency is Alan Wells OBE.

The mission of the Basic Skills Agency is to:

> *promote continuing improvement in the basic skills of the population of England and Wales.*

We have four main aims.

1. To *promote* the importance of basic skills and the work of the Agency.
2. To initiate and support *development*.
3. To improve the *effectiveness* of basic skills programmes.
4. To *disseminate* good practice.

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1-19 New Oxford Street, London, WC1A 1NU

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Published March 1998

ISBN 1 85990 077 1

Design Studio 21

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